

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. **(currently amended)** A disposable diaper, comprising:
a diaper main body including a top sheet, a back sheet and an absorbent body disposed between said top sheet and back sheet;
a pair of side flaps respectively extending outwardly from respective side edge portions in a lateral direction of said diaper main body, the side flaps being disposed between said top sheet and back sheet, each of said side flaps comprising an elastic sheet sandwiched between upper and lower non-woven fabric layers;
a fixing tape having a hook member and being disposed in proximity of an outermost lateral edge of each of the side flaps extending outwardly, and
an engaging region provided on each said side flap to engage the respective fixing tape with said side flap through the hook member, ~~said engaging region including portions having an engaging force with said hook member that is different from an engaging force in other portions of said engaging region~~

wherein

said engaging region comprises (a) an engaging portion engageable with said hook member, and (b) a non-engaging portion with which said hook member can barely be engaged or cannot be engaged at all and which comprises a nonwoven fabric having a low engaging force with said hook member;

an entire area of said engaging portion is in a range of 5% to 50% of the entire area of said hook member;

said fixing tape comprises (i) a fixing tape substrate and (ii) said hook member provided on a surface of said fixing tape substrate;

said fixing tape substrate comprises a nonwoven fabric having a low engaging force with said hook member; and

said non-engaging portion comprises a temporary fixing portion of said fixing tape.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The disposal diaper according to claim 1, wherein said fixing tape comprises a fixing tape substrate and said hook member provided on a surface of said fixing tape substrate; and

 said fixing tape substrate is provided with a gripping portion at an end thereof and an attaching portion at the opposite end thereof, said attaching portion being attached to the respective side flap.

4. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein the engaging force of said engaging region with said hook member is in a range of 0.3 N/25mm to 2.2 N/25mm.

5. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein said non-engaging portion has an engaging force with said hook member not greater than 2.2 N/25mm.

6-7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein said hook member of said fixing tape is a male engaging piece of a hook-and-loop fastener.

9. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein said fixing tape is attached to a surface of said side flap and is foldable along the outermost lateral edge of said side flap, in such a manner that said hook member faces said surface of said side flap, so as to be temporarily fixed to said surface of said side flap in a manner where said hook

member achieves engagement with said engaging region when said fixing tape is folded back.

10. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein said fixing tape is attached to said side flap in such a manner that said hook member opposes a surface of said side flap, so that said fixing tape is temporarily fixed to said surface of said side flap in a manner where said hook member achieves engagement with said engaging region.

11. (previously presented) The disposable diaper according to claim 1, wherein said fixing tape is attached to one of opposite surfaces of said side flap and is foldable along the outermost lateral edge of said side flap, in such a manner that said hook member faces the other one of said opposite surfaces of the side flap, so as to be temporarily fixed to said other surface of said side flap in a manner where said hook member achieves engagement with said engaging region after said fixing tape is folded back.

12-14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) The disposable diaper according to claim [[9]] 1, wherein ~~said fixing tape comprises a fixing tape substrate and said hook member provided on a surface of said fixing tape substrate;~~

~~said fixing tape substrate is provided with a gripping portion at an end thereof and an attaching portion at the opposite end thereof, said attaching portion being attached to [[said]] a surface of said side flap; and~~

~~said fixing tape is provided with an opening in said attaching portion, a portion of said surface of said side flap being exposed through said opening and mechanically engageable with said hook member when said fixing tape is folded back.~~

16-20. (canceled)

21. (new) A disposable diaper, comprising:

a diaper main body including a topsheet, a backsheet and an absorbent body disposed between said topsheet and backsheet sheets;

a pair of side flaps respectively extending outwardly from an end portion of said diaper main body in a lateral direction of said diaper main body; and

a pair of fixing taps each being attached to one of said side flaps in a vicinity of an outermost lateral edge of said side flap;

wherein

said fixing tape is provided with a hook member;

each said side flap and the respective fixing tape are engageable through the hook member;

an engaging region is provided on each said side flap where the hook member of the respective fixing tape is engageable for temporarily fixing said fixing tape to said side flap before use, said engaging region comprising

an engaging portion with which said hook member is engageable; and

a non-engaging portion of a material which has either a low engaging force with said hook member or no engaging force at all with the hook member;

an entire area of said engaging portion is in a range of 5% to 50% of the entire area of said hook member;

said fixing tape comprises (i) a fixing tape substrate and (ii) said hook member provided on a surface of said fixing tape substrate;

said fixing tape substrate comprises a nonwoven fabric having a low engaging force with said hook member; and

each said side flap comprises (a) an elastic sheet and (b) a non-woven fabric which is joined to the elastic sheet on a side adapted to face a wearer's body in use.

22. (new) The disposal diaper according to claim 21, wherein

said fixing tape substrate is provided with a gripping portion at an end thereof and an attaching portion at the opposite end thereof, said attaching portion being attached to the respective side flap.

23. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 21, wherein the engaging force of said engaging region with said hook member is in a range of 0.3 N/25mm to 2.2 N/25mm.

24. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 21, wherein said non-engaging portion has an engaging force with said hook member not greater than 2.2 N/25mm.

25. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 21, wherein said hook member of said fixing tape is a male engaging piece of a hook-and-loop fastener.

26. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 21, wherein said fixing tape is attached to an inner surface of said side flap and is foldable along the outermost lateral edge of said side flap, in such a manner that said hook member faces said inner surface of said side flap, so as to be temporarily fixed to said surface of said side flap in a manner where said hook member achieves engagement with said engaging region when said fixing tape is folded back.

27. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 21, wherein said fixing tape is attached to said side flap in such a manner that said hook member opposes a surface of said side flap, so that said fixing tape is temporarily fixed to said surface of said side flap in a manner where said hook member achieves engagement with said engaging region.

28. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 21, wherein said fixing tape is attached to an outer surface of said side flap and is foldable along the outermost lateral edge of

said side flap, in such a manner that said hook member faces an opposite, inner surface of said side flap, so as to be temporarily fixed to said inner surface of said side flap in a manner where said hook member achieves engagement with said engaging region after said fixing tape is folded back.

29. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 26, wherein said non-engaging portion of said engaging region is formed on at least one of said fixing tape and said inner surface of said side flap.

30. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 26, wherein said engaging portion in said engaging region is formed on said inner surface of said side flap.

31. (new) The disposable diaper according to claim 26, wherein said fixing tape substrate is provided with a gripping portion at an end thereof and an attaching portion at the opposite end thereof, said attaching portion being attached to said inner surface of said side flap; and

 said fixing tape is provided with an opening in said attaching portion, a portion of said inner surface of said side flap being exposed through said opening and mechanically engageable with said hook member when said fixing tape is folded back.